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ABSTRACT

Twenty women responded to a student newspaper ad at the University of California, Berkeley to discuss in confidence personal experiences of sexual harassment. Information gained was used to develop a seven-page questionnaire with both open and closed-ended questions on sexual harassment experiences. It was mailed to a random sample of 400 female seniors. Harassment was defined as "any unwanted sexual leers, suggestions, comments, or physical contact which you find objectionable." More than 95 percent of the 169 respondents reported knowing at least one woman who had been harassed by a male instructor: 55 percent had themselves had such an experience. Almost three-quarters of the respondents felt such occurrence constituted a serious problem. Specific comments from the questionnaires provide material for further analysis. It is concluded that the experience of sexual harassment both reinforces the devaluation of women's abilities and contributes to the erosion of commitment to other than traditional roles: it inhibits the development of mentor relationships with male professionals. Some response tabulations and specific responses are presented. (MSE)

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Sexual Harassment on a University Campus: The Confluence of Authority Relations, Sexual Interest and Gender Stratification

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Widespread sexual abuse of women workers by male employers has always existed.[1] Recently, however, public awareness of the problem has increased dramatically. Beginning with a survey in 1976 (Safran, 1976), an accelerating number of reports in newspapers and magazines suggest that a large proportion of women are subjected to the disruptive and coercive sexual behavior of male supervisors and co-workers. The term sexual harassment is now used to encompass the full range of these unwanted behaviors:[2]

> [Sexual harassment] can be any or all of the following: verbal sexual suggestions or jokes, constant leering or ogling, 'accidently' brushing against your body, a 'friendly' pat, squeeze, pinch or arm around you, catching you alone for a quick kiss, the explicit proposition backed by threat of losing your job, and forced sexual relations (Working Women United Institute, 1978:1).

Recent publication of three books on sexual harassment (Farley, 1979; MacKinnon, 1979; Backhouse and Cohen, 1979) and a nascent social science interest (e.g., Gutek and Nakamura, 1979) reflect the issues growing visibility. As with rape (Rose, 1977a, b), feminists have been instrumental in seeking public and legal recognition of sexual harassment as a social problem and in rallying its victims to seek redress for their grievances.[3]

One thrust of these efforts has been the increased awareness that college students as well as workers are affected.[4] The Association of American Colleges' Project on the Status and Education of Women (1978) has declared that sexual harassment on campus is a serious and widespread "hidden issue." A number of brief accounts of surveys and individual cases of reported harassment tend to corroborate the Project's assertion (Dolan, 1977; Munich, 1978; Lesser, 1979; Fields, 1979). In this paper we undertake a sociological explication of the experience of sexual

harassment within the university setting.

APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Acknowledging that sexual harassment exists is not synonymous with understanding the pehnomenon sociologically. For example, popular accounts and discussions of women's sexual harassment frequently are "balanced" with examples of men harassed by women and straights by gays (e.g., Elias, 1979). In an apparent reaction to a feminist issue, the practice is portrayed as "gender neutral." Sexual harassment, it seems, can happen to anyone. In reality, it remains a problem faced almost exclusively by women.[5]

The converse proposition that sexual harassment occurs because men find it difficult, if not impossible, to control their "natural" sexual urges would appear to derive less from sociological acumen and more from masculine rationalization. According to one behavioral scientist's version of this view, a woman confronted with the intrusion of male sexual self-interest in the workplace should be complimented, not incensed, "accepting the reality" that the man has been "genetically selected" for sexual arousal (Hagen, 1979). More popularly, the notion that sexual provocativeness suddenly destroys a man's ability to restrain himself is sociologically naive.[6]

The premise that women's sexual manipulation of their superiors either underlies sexual harassment or is a problem of equal if not greater magnitude is misleading. Obviously individuals of both sexes can be sexually manipulative, but the proposition that women gain an "unfair advantage" in interactions with males by using their sexuality is not true (Bourne, 1977). It is after all the more powerful member of a dyad (most

often a male) who generally holds the greater perogative to define the appropriate terms of an interaction, including its degree of sexuality. Men in positions of power encourage, accept, resist, or coerce sexual exchanges with relatively little risk to themselves. Despite male ideology, sexual harassment by men and women "using sex" are hardly countervailing forces.

The opposite explanation that sexual motivation per se has little or nothing to do with sexual harassment, while nearer the mark, is incomplete. According to this view (Farley, 1979; cf. Henley, 1977), sexual harassment is a willful exercise of male domination using sex simply as the most efficacious weapon available. This dynamic may well underlie harassment by groups of men in previously all-male work situations.[7] But sexual harassment is more typically a dyadic practice. Individual women are confronted, usually covertly or in private, with the unwanted sexual attentions of a male superior.

The study of sexual harassment, therefore, should be approached as the confluence of authority relations and sexual interest in a society stratified by gender.

PRESENT STUDY

Methods

In the spring of 1978 an ad in the University of California, Berkeley student newspaper encouraged students to discuss in confidence personal experiences of sexual harassment over the telephone or in person with the first author. Information gained from preliminary interviews with the 20 women who responded was then used to generate a seven-page questionnaire on sexual harassment. The questionnaire contained both open and closed-ended

items and elicited information on personal experiences of harassment. In June 1978 it was mailed to a random sample of four hundred female students enrolled in their senior year at the UCB campus.

The sample was re-contacted by phone and by mail a week after the questionnaires had been sent. Despite final examinations and graduation ceremonies, 269 women returned completed questionnaires, a response rate of 67 percent.[8]

Following the practice of the Working Women United Institute (1978), sexual harassment was defined on the questionnaire as: "Any unwanted sexual leers, suggestions, comments, or physical contact which you find objectionable." While those who returned the questionnaire were representative of senior women at Berkeley by several criteria, our purpose in this paper is not to derive statistical models of harassment nor to estimate its true incidence.[9] Rather, we present only briefly results which indicate the general extent to shich sexual harassment is reported and recognized as a serious problem by university women. We then offer a detailed analysis of harassment and its consequences based on accounts from those returning our questionnaires. Occasionally, when noted, the experience of those responding to our newspaper solicitation will be cited as well.

Preliminary Results

More than one-third of the respondents (95 students) reported knowing personally at least one woman who had been sexually harassed by a male instructor at the University of California. Fifty-five students reported

that they themselves had been harassed by one or more instructors.[10] This is approximately one-fifth of the respondents (or, expressed differently, one-eighth of the entire sample).

Students were asked to gauge the severity of the problem experienced by a victim of sexual harassment. Seventy-three percent of all respondents felt such occurrence constituted either a "Very Serious" or "Somewhat Serious" problem (Table 1). There are no major differences in perceived severity among three groups of respondents: Personally Harassed, Knowing Someone Harassed (but not harassed oneself), and Neither.[11]

Table 1 here

However, as indicated in Table 2, there are highly significant group differences in the perceived frequency of sexual harassment on campus, a measure unrelated to perceived severity (gamma = 18, ns). The majority of women in each of the three groups see harassment as occurring "occasionally." But students in both the Personally Harassed and Know Someone groups are much more likely than those without firsthand knowledge to perceive that harassment is a frequent occurrence.

Table 2 here

Our preliminary results suggest that the experience of sexual harassment on the university campus is not an isolated event. A considerable proportion of students report having been personally harassed. Even more report knowing someone who has had the experience. Sexual harassment is generally judged as a serious problem for its victims, and those with personal experience or awareness of an instance of harassment are much more

likely to perceive that it occurs frequently. We now turn to a detailed analysis of the pattern of harassment reported by our sample of university women.

THE EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Of the fifty-five students reporting sexual harassment, fifty provided sufficiently detailed description of their experiences to be useful for subsequent analysis. The fifty incidents assumed various forms and degrees of severity. Most typical were intrusive expressions of sexual and personal interest in the student. Sexual overtures, comments regarding physical appearance, obvious staring and leering, and inappropriate physical contact all were mentioned with some regularity.

More characteristic of the preliminary interviews than the random sample, but still rare, were instances of physical violation:

> I needed help with an assignment so I went to the professor's office hours. He was staring at my breats....It made me uncomfortable and confused....He reached over, unbuttoned my blouse and started fondling my breasts (preliminary interview).

Not so rare, though still infrequent, were explicit propositions of academic reward for sexual "favors." At times the possibility of punishment for refusing such "bargains" was also communicated:

> He would make verbal expressions of his desires and would often give me a choice of having an affair and doing well in his class without hardly any effort, or refusing him and suffering in the course. He often made excuses to detain me after class and graded my papers very hard to force me to come to his office. I was tense and uneasy in his presence (#246).[12]

Psychological and academic rewards can be given out as subtle or not so subtle inducements to reciprocate a sexual interest. One of a group of women writing about sexual harassment at the university illustrates an example of the unsubtle approach. She had politely turned down a direct

sexual proposition on a previous encounter with the explanation that she was happily married and did not do that kind of thing.

> In response to my question about which of the two grades appearing on the midterm would be recorded, he asked me which one I wanted, the high grade or the lower one. (He was towering over me, peering down my blouse). I said I wanted the grade I deserved. It appeared that he was trying to barter for my "affections"; he acted as though he was giving me something out of the goodness of his heart and whether or not I deserved it didn't matter. Obviously, he was trying to make me feel obligated to return the 'favor.' How are students supposed to get a fair assessment of their work when professors use their power to give grades to get sexual favors.[13]

In the present study, more typically, the professor's inducements were more gradual and less unambiguously linked to either concrete rewards (e.g., a higher grade) or immediate sexual obligation. Friendliness, extra help, flexibility in grading policy or deadlines all are reported behaviors which are used to accumulate credit status for potential sexual exchange. They are examples of selective help given by males to covertly "press their pursuits" of attractive females (Goffman, 1977). The bluntness of a direct proposition can be avoided through manipulation of the authority and latitude of the faculty role. Indeed, one male faculty member who responded to our newspaper ad to offer his perception of sexual harassment, described some of his colleagues as fundamentally "dishonest" in this regard. They, he reported, falsely praise women students' work with the intention of rendering them more vulnerable to future sexual advances.

MANAGING THE TROUBLE

For the majority of students in our study sexual harassment occurred when a male instructor attempted to "come-on" to the student. In response to this failure to maintain the sexual neutrality of the "official"

teacher-student relationship (Bourne, 1977), women students must attempt to manage the situation. By acknowledging - indeed blatantly pursuing - his sexual self-interest, the instructor had "blown his cover." To the woman student refusing to barter on this sexual market he had become "trouble" (Emerson and Messinger, 1977). She now had the task of renegotiating her status as a student.

The "power-dependency" (Emerson, 1962) aspects of the teacher-student relationship severely inhibited initial attempts at remedying the situation:

> I tried to let him know I wasn't interested in a personal relationship with him. I couldn't be as rude as I would have liked to have been. At the time I felt I had to put up with it because I was trying to get into the honor's program (preliminary interview).

> I ignored it, I didn't want to make a scene and possibly jeopardize my student standing (#60).

> I didn't say anything because I thought being outspoken might effect my grade (#137).

> I didn't say anything but I wanted to tell him to fuck-off. But I needed the recommendation and am too polite - I didn't want to be totally rude (preliminary interview).

Indirect tactics to forestall escalation of the sexual harassment included ignoring or "tuning out" sexual innuendo and directing disclosures of personal matters (e.g., marital dissatisfaction, "my wife and I have an open marriage," loneliness) back to academic matters. Physical actions such as bringing a friend to office hours, pointedly leaving the office door open upon entering. and sitting at a safe distance were tactics which carried implicit messages that the behavior had been troublesome.

Calling attention to a boyfriend or husband appeared to be a common method of checking a professor's sexual interest. The communication was implicit:

> I had my boyfriend pick me up after class to make it clear to the professor that I was involved with someone (#130).

Or explicit:

> I just told him I was living with a man and was not interested in seeing anyone else (#052).

The tactic usually made use of the student's actual situation, though in at least one case it was a pragmatic fabrication - "I told him I had a boyfriend, which I did not" (#108). Information about boyfriends was introduced as a response both to relatively ambiguous situations and to explicit sexual propositions. In both instances, apparently, students believed that this information was the one effective means to "keep him at a distance."

At the point at which acknowledging an instructor's sexual interest is no longer avoidable, mention of a boyfriend is a common tactic used to forestall further harassment. Direct complaint would make sexuality the focus of the relationship and make the trouble a "fully interpersonal matter" (Emerson and Messinger, 1977:125). Mention of a boyfriend legitimates rather than contests or sanctions the introduction of sexuality, but simultaneously it isolates the instructor's sexuality, denying it any connectedness with her own. The tactic remains one of compromise.

DOES MANAGING WORK?

Only occasionally, then, did students report directly "telling off" the instructor - the risks of direct complaint may be too great. Thirty percent of the students reporting that they had been harassed indicated that they did not even communicate their displeasure directly to the instructor.

This did not prove to be a particularly effective way of managing the harassment, for in 13 of the 15 instances students reported that the unwanted sexual attention persisted. Predictably, the 70 percent who communicated in various ways that the instructor's sexual attention was not acceptable were more successful in affecting its cessation. Yet males' superior physical and social power as well as the belief perhaps that a woman's "no" really means "yes" suggests that even fairly direct requests to desist may not be honored.

There is evidence this is very much the case. For example, using Emerson's (1962) definition of power as "implicit in the other's dependency," we examined the effects of three likely indicators of instructor's power: tenured status of the professor, student and professor in the same field, and student aspirations for graduate school. When less than all three of these conditions were present, sexual harassment ceased after expression of displeasure in 21 of 24 cases. However, when all three conditions were present, the unwanted sexual attention stopped only half the time (five of 11 cases). Students at a large university are not necessarily highly dependent on a single professor. When they are, however, there is a greater chance the professor's behavior can or will not be challenged as effectively.

Management strategies have direct costs even if an instructor does desist from his pattern of unwanted sexual behaviors. In rare instances students reported that the troublesome sexual harassment had been successfully "talked cut" and mutually satisfactory student-teacher exchange re-established. More often, however, students reported that faculty members inflicted punishment for noncompliance with sexual attention. Reprisals varied from withdrawing intellectual support and encouragement previously

given generously, sharp and often sarcastic criticism of work once praised, and assigning a lower grade than merited to a student's work. In the last instance, students sometimes were unaware of the forthcoming punishment. A woman felt that she had fairly successfully managed a professor's sexual interest by making her boyfriend highly visible:

> He wasn't so nice to me after I didn't show any interest. I didn't think anything of the incident until I got my grade, then I realized that the grade I got was due to my reaction to him. I knew another woman in the class who did terrible work but got a higher grade than I. Since then, I've heard notorious stories about him (#130).

The more severe instances of negative repercussions following non-compliance with sexual overtures occurred where the student had a high degree of interaction with the instructor. For example, in one case where the student's interaction with a professor included part-time employment, the consequences extended beyond unfavorable treatment in a single course. She reports:

> Up until the time of our conflict he repeatedly told me that the work I was doing for him was good and that he was pleased with it. During the conflict period I was told the complete opposite: that my work was lousy, that I was lazy....He tried to make me feel inept and incompetent. He then proceeded to prevent me from obtaining another job in the department. When the sexual conflict arose, my position was suddenly terminated and no explanation was given. As an employee and a student in the department my credibility was completely ruined. (For a while, I really worried about the quality of my work, I questioned whether it was good or not, even though I knew it was.) (#244).

In summary, the student's ability to monitor her instructor's behavior and to renegotiate her student status tended to vary with the degree of power-dependence in the teacher-student relationship. Thus, direct communications of displeasure were generally hampered by fear of reprisal, sometimes not heeded and occasionally punished, despite precautions not to be confrontational.

THE STRATEGY OF PRAGMATIC AVOIDANCE

Women students often adopted what we identify as a strategy of pragmatic avoidance. Twenty-two students indicated that they had no further contact with the instructor subsequent to the incident of sexual harassment. A similar number (24) provided straightforward examples of such avoidance in their open-ended responses:

> I avoided situations where we would have to converse. In short, I tried to have as little interaction with the person as possible (#063).
>
> When he didn't respond to my hints and continued to give me unwanted attention, I avoided him (#073).
>
> I never went to his office hours (#178).
>
> I no longer went to section because of the uncomfortable situation (#168).
>
> I never spoke to him alone again. He was an ignorant, insensitive person and I just avoided having to say anything to him (#030).

Non-verbal sexual harassment, e.g., various forms of "checking out" a student, as well as more direct come-ons were experienced as irritating and annoying. Pragmatic avoidance was viewed as the way to preclude further unpleasant interactions and the possibility of escalated harassment:

> I believe it started through the eyes: staring at my breasts, looking me up and down... He was being overly helpful... [As a result] I didn't trust the man and, thus, discontinued seeing him as my advisor... I had the opportunity to work with this professor during the summer, but because of his reputation, not only regarding me, but others, I did not take advantage of the opportunity (213).

Thus, anticipated sexual harassment sometimes resulted in a "better safe than sorry" course of action. This occurred despite recognizing the value of the foregone academic relationship, as a woman in an earlier campus survey articulated:

> [M]y academic relationships with particular professors have been inhibited by a sexual factor. I have not gotten too friendly

with one professor who could help me with my academic work, because I feared he would be interested in some kind of sexual relationship. So, I avoided him, missing out on his academic support (Dolan, 1977).

LOSS OF CONFIDENCE

Withdrawing from future interaction where possible tended to be the strategy of students with little prior involvement with the professor in question. Where considerable interaction had already occurred, however, the surfacing of unwanted sexual attention tended to cause confusion and uncertainty. Standards of evaluation became cloudy as the professor's sexual interest became clear:

> It became difficult to know whether I was doing a good job (#207).

> I worried that he had given me an "A" on the midterm to convince me to go to bed with him. I could make a clear decision about the quality of my work in the class for this reason (#202).

> I wondered what my real status in the class was - my real ability (#041).

Eighteen students reported experiencing self-doubt and loss of confidence in academic ability as a result of sexual harassment. This response appeared to be empirically as well as analytically distinct from adopting the strategy of pragmatic avoidance. The students typically had rather extensive previous interaction with the instructor and most likely did not find it easy to simply blame him for the trouble and withdraw from the situation (Emerson and Messinger, 1977):

> As this particular professor knew me and my work better than anyone else, I came away feeling very insecure about my academic work - [afraid] that his support of me was skewed by his sexual attraction (preliminary interviews).

> I all of a sudden had an anxiety attack about my intelligence... I wondered if all these years I only got good grades because of my looks (#129).

> For sometimes afterwards I felt I had no ability in my major field, I couldn't analyze effectively or write clearly (#068).

BECOMING DISILLUSIONED WITH MALE FACULTY

In addition to reacting to the specific instructor involved, twenty-four students reported a changed attitude toward male faculty in general. Women students perceived faculty behavior which theretofore had appeared natural and helpful as calculated and sexually motivated. They emphasized the extent to which future interactions would be constrained by a sense of distrust:

> I became disillusioned and suspicious of people I'd otherwise responded naturally to. I'm more cautious of male faculty in general (#161).
>
> [With male faculty, I am] more cautious - less open and friendly (#236).
>
> It made me more cautious about being open and friendly with them (#025).

In a couple instances, students added comments on the sexual composition of the faculty:

> I wish there were more female teachers and faculty members on campus so I wouldn't have to face a similar situation. I became doubtful and fearful of male faculty; I thought they must all be the same (#246).
>
> I'm much more guarded in relating to my professors and male TA's. I'm so relieved if I find out they're gay (#129).

Disillusionment and caution regarding male faculty accompanied uncertainty about one's academic performance. With only a single exception, all those who reported loss of academic self-confidence also indicated the changed attitude toward male faculty in general. The lesson learned was the wisdom of caution and avoidance of academic involvement in the future:

> I was so disillusioned with academia - [the experience] lessened my confidence on whether I felt it was worth going through with it all (#007).
>
> I had just entered college....After dealing with him I never took an in-depth study again (#236).

THE PATTERN OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

From the experiences of fifty students in our sample it is possible to discern two broadly defined patterns of sexual harassment:

1. In one form, representing perhaps a half of the reported incidents, unwanted sexual attention typically occurs in situations involving minimum prior face-to-face interaction. Monitoring the instructor's behavior, informing him of its inappropriateness and avoiding or minimizing future contact with him are ways of pragmatically managing the harassment. Neither confidence in one's own ability nor attitudes toward male faculty are fundamentally altered, for the instructor can be isolated as the cause of the trouble. Either he is viewed as a deviant case or the student already expected such behavior from male faculty in the first place!

2. In the other form, however, sexual harassment typically involved a more established instructor-student relationship. Whether or not blatantly coercive, this type of harassment is more disruptive, disillusioning and harder to dismiss. When dependence on an instructor's evaluation exists prior to the harassment, the result is often confusion and uncertainty about one's ability to function successfully in male-dominated academia. Rather than avoiding the single instructor in question, interaction with all male faculty thenceforth is constrained by a greater sense of mistrust, caution, and avoidance of situations in which one may be vulnerable to further harassment.

"BUT WOMEN USE SEX"

Our results indicate that sexual attention from male instructors often is unwanted and sometimes is experienced as a serious problem by university

women. The reported experiences of these women violate commonly held assumptions about women and sexuality. "But women use sex," said with indignation or resentment, is often the male counter to an expression of concern about sexual harassment. Sociologists themselves have uncritically supported the conventional male wisdom that women seek sexual attention and actively manipulate men with sexual charm to gain favors or advantages in transactions (e.g. Collins, 1975; Safillos-Rothschild, 1975). Male culpability has been neglected.

The bias has been blatant. For example, in a major sociological study of university life the authors "analyze" sexual exchange between teachers and students as follows:

> Innumerable girls have found that a pretty face and a tight sweater were an adequate substitute for diligence and cleverness when dealing with a male teacher. Some, having been frustrated in efforts to get by on this basis, have pushed matters further and ended up in bed - though not necessarily with an A (Jencks and Riesman, 1968: 427n).

Similarly, an empirical study of the relationship between personality and attractiveness and university grades was published in an American Sociological Association journal with the following "scientific" conclusion:

> The suggestion that men live by their brains and women by their bodies was made as far back as genesis. Although not astoundingly new the implications are frightening...The results imply that the poor college professor is a rather put-upon creature, hoodwinked by the male students (later-born) and enticed by the female students (first-born) as he goes about his academic and personal responsibilities. He is seemingly caught in the maelstrom of student intrigue and machination. The picture is bleak. In defense we can only offer the consolation that [male faculty members scored significantly higher than the students on the Machiavellian scale]. It is hoped that the academicians are fighting strategem with strategem (Singer, 1964: 148).

In addition to his fanciful portrait of beleagured male professors, Singer rejects categorically the possibility that instructors' behavior or bias has any influence on an observed correlation between conventional female

attractiveness and GPA. Rather, unsupported conjecture about female manipulativeness runs rampant (e.g., even asking questions becomes "exhibiting behavior").[14]

The present study helps counter the distorted notion that women <u>in general</u> profit through the practice of sexual manipulation. By examining women's accounts of male-initiated unwanted sexual attention the critical nexus of power and sexual perogative becomes more salient. In fact, successful sexual manipulation of a professor, were it feasable, is not seen as necessarily resulting in a net gain even for the <u>individual</u> woman:

> I think to myself, do I want an 'A' bad enough to do something? If I'm not taken seriously for my mind, I might as well play on something else. To get into graduate school I guess I'll just ingratiate myself to some professor. No, I wouldn't. It's better to know you got there because you really belonged there. You would always be wondering if you could have made it otherwise (preliminary interview).

Of more than two hundred sixty respondents in the present study, only fourteen acknowledged ever contemplating the use of sexuality to get better grades or a much-needed recommendation. Despite male expectations that women use their sexuality, the students at least avow to "play it straight" and to refuse to barter on sexual terms.

DISCUSSION: THE COSTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

At major universities an institutional priority on faculty research severely constrains the time and energies that individual faculty devote to instruction and interaction with undergraduates (Blau, 1973). Because university faculty serve as gatekeepers for entry into professions as well as imparters of knowledge, access to individual instructors can be

a critical scarce resource for students. Though evaluation of students supposedly reflects meritocratic norms, the teacher role permits a wide latitude in the degree of interaction and helpfulness granted individual students. An instructor enjoys, therefore, considerable discretionary power to provide or not provide academic rewards (grades, recommendations) and related resources (help, encouragement, support).[15] And, similar to the workplace, in the university it is predominantly men who exercise this discretionary power over women.[16]

The growing number of college women and their increased professional aspirations have been accompanied by social psychological analyses of the numerous barriers faced by women seeking "nontraditional" careers (e.g. Mednick, Tangri, and Hoffman, 1975).[17] Characteristically such careers have been difficult for women to enter successfully (Epstein, 1970). We have noted that resentment of female competition at times finds expression in the complaint that women's sexuality somehow confers an unfair advantage. At other times, conversely, men exaggerate the expression of male sexual culture in a woman's presence to communicate to her that she is not "one of the boys" and to further isolate her attempts to work effectively (Kanter, 1977). Sexual harassment of women students and workers exacts similar if not more pernicious costs. Even the apparently successful management of relatively mild incidents of sexual harassment contribute to the cumulative disadvantage faced by women.

In the university women are competing with men, theoretically on the same terms, for training and credentials required for entry into professional careers. But to the extent that male faculty members

themselves perceive that women students are not or should not be as talented or committed as men, they can act or fail to act in a myriad of ways, often subtle, resulting in a "discriminatory environment" (Bourne and Wikler, 1978; Coser and Rokoff, 1971; Rowe, 1977). Sexual harassment both results from this environment and facilitates its perpetuation.

When a male instructor responds to a woman student on the basis of sexual self-interest an obvious deviation from the supposedly meritocratic and universalistic norms of the university has occurred. In fact, changes in sexual morality and university life have led to a much greater acceptance of both casual and intimate relationships between faculty and students. A great deal of sexual interaction is now fully tolerated. Indeed, the sexual self-interest of male faculty is often facilitated by institutionalized contact with women students.[18]

Sexuality per se is not the problem. Rather, male faculty have the power to pursue sexual self-interest in a setting where they also determine to a considerable degree academic rewards (and punishments), intellectual self-concept and professional commitment. In contexts such as graduate training the power to influence one's career can be substantial and problems of sexual intrusion perhaps even more likely.

Individual professors and teaching assistants typically have less power over the undergraduate women in our study. But in a society where women have received little support for intellectual accomplishment, an instructor's power to manipulate jointly academic validation and his own sexual self-interest is hardly innocuous. Self-confidence and commitment can be shaken by the intrusion of sexual harassment.

The cost of actual reprisals (e.g., lower evaluations, cessation of support, termination of employment) are readily comprehensible. But the implicit threat of reprisal also is a reminder of the male perogative to define a barter dynamic of sexual exchange--of the sexual rather than "official" criterion to be used to evaluate women's academic worth.

Women students learn, moreover, that simple friendliness is often misinterpreted as an invitation for sexual advances. The experience of sexual harassment is only the most direct indicator that male instructors continue to impose a sexual definition on their female students. Even the necessary tactic of informing an instructor that one's emotional/sexual commitments are elsewhere ("I have a boyfriend") serves to confirm that a woman is defined in relation to a male rather than as an independent scholar or professional. And, as Bourne (1977) has suggested, when pre-professional or professional women are categorized as "sexy" their competence and authority are devalued. Sexuality is used to disqualify women from positions of responsibility (cf. Cott, 1978).

Yet women continually confronted with the possibility of sexual harassment are put in a "double bind" situation. The avoidance and mistrust of male faculty, the logical and pragmatic reaction of so many women in our study, hinders as well the formation of serious mentor relationships. Without comfortable access to the informal channels of professional socialization, women ultimately experience less control over their academic lives.[19]

Moreover, as Bourne (1977) has also pointed out, women who do not conform to the appropriate feminine stereotype are labelled

"masculine/neuter." A woman so categorized may be perceived as competent but in moral and psychological terms not a "top person" and therefore devoid of ultimate authority. A wary stance adopted to forestall sexual harassment and stereotyping can be interpreted as coldness and being emotionally "difficult" (cf. Wikler, 1976). The cumulative effects of being perceived in such a way may be as serious as the direct reprisals that accompany rebuffed sexual overtures.

Our results indicate that sexual harassment of women students is endemic to university life. In response to harassment the women in our study have adopted individual ad hoc management strategies which ironically further remove them from opportunities for professional advancement. Thus, the experience of sexual harassment both reflects and reinforces the devaluation of women's abilities and contributes to the erosion of commitment to other than traditional roles.

CONCLUSION: GENDER STRATIFICATION AS THE BASIS FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Ultimately, sexual harassment in both the workplace and university is a product of our system of gender stratification. Men and women are seen as having different assets, rationalized through biological and normative "sex differences." According to traditional middle-class ideology, men "work" and women manifest the appropriate "breeder-feeder-provider" (Boulding, 1976) aspects of their gender role (cf. Feldberg and Glenn, 1979). In fact, superior male resources and ideology function to perpetuate men's domination in both the "work" and "home" domains. Where men are the sole wage earners, the exercise of male power within the family is considerable (Scanzoni, 1972). Female labor force

participation has increased dramatically in recent decades. But the increase has been tightly accompanied by the exercise of male authority, as employers and supervisors, in the workplace (Wolf and Fligstein, 1979a, b) and no significant change in wages relative to men (Blau, 1979).

Men, therefore, have retained considerable power to define women as their personal service complement. Women's sexuality is an essential component of this definition. Women thus learn that, without sufficient economic resources of their own, their sexuality is imbued with an "exchange value" and that they are to operate in a "personal sexual market" (Collins, 1975; Safilios-Rothschild, 1976.)[20]

Sociologists and laypersons have noted the obvious aspects of barter for access to this female sexuality. Economic resources, status and power influence outcomes in "free market" courtship and marriage processes (Scanzoni, 1972; Rubin, 1973; Peplau, 1979). Less acknowledged, and almost entirely neglected by sociologists (cf. Lipman-Blumen and Tickameyer, 1975), however, is the extent to which male sexual interest operates within formal, not "free," role relationships. Increased rates of female participation in work and higher education have also increased the "legitimate" or "official" male contact with female subordinates (e.g., employer-employee or teacher-student). Such contact facilitates sexual pursuit. Changes in sexual attitudes and behavior as well as in working conditions increase the likelihood of sexualized interaction.

Men can discharge selectively the power and rewards of their positions as a means to obligate women sexually (Blau, 1964). Women learn that the "official" attention of a male superior is often a

vehicle through which he can "press his pursuits" (Goffman, 1977). What is often mistakenly perceived by males as unfounded distrust or suspicion of motives has its basis in previous experience with male "helpfulness."

The dynamics of sexual barter or exchange thus are often embedded with formal role relationships. In such cases men typically have an additional degree of power to manipulate and obscure sexual intentions as well as to reward and punish directly the women who have become the objects of sexual interest.

Here as elsewhere patterns of male sexual initiative operate.[21] However, managing male sexual assertion and deflecting or inhibiting unwanted sexual attention becomes more problematic. The ability to thwart a male's "attentions" are undercut by the fact of subordination. Quite simply, a subordinate often is less than free to say "no" and a superior less than compelled to take "no" for an answer.

In a gender system which stratifies women as sex objects and men as "success objects" (Laws and Schwartz, 1975), sexual harassment is an expression of existing male-female dynamics, not a deviation from them. The continuation of sexual harassment as an institutional practice reinforces the idea that women are to be sexually and personally accommodating to male authority. As illustrated by our study of university students, women do adopt interpersonal strategies to manage the disruptive and deleterious aspects of harassment. But the institutional subordination which underlies sexual harassment constrains the effectiveness of these strategies. Until it is recognized as an institutional problem and grievance procedures are well established, sexual harassment will continue to reinforce gender inequality.[22]

TABLE 1

Estimated Severity of Sexual Harassment

by Type of Harassment Experience

	Personally Harassed (N=46)	Know Someone Harassed (N=53)	Neither (N=152)
Minor/Not at All Serious	17.4	5.7	11.8
Mildly Serious	17.4	15.1	15.1
Somewhat Serious	34.8	35.8	34.2
Very Serious	30.4	43.4	38.8
	100.0%	100.0%	99.9%

$X^2 = 4.23$ (ns)

TABLE 2

Estimated Frequency of Sexual Harassment

by Type of Harrassment Experience

	Personally Harassed (N=49)	Know Someone Harassed (N=53)	Neither (N=154)
Seldom/Almost Never	14.3	11.3	46.1
Occasionally	63.3	73.6	41.3
Frequently/Almost Always	22.4	15.1	2.6
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 43.59$ ($p < .001$)

Footnotes

1. There exists no comprehensive history of the sexual abuse of women workers. For observations concerning indentured servants and private household workers, especially black women, see Dollard, 1937; Morris, 1946; Verna Mae, 1972; Lerner, 1973; Katzman, 1978. Sexual exploitation of working girls and women as they were drawn into the industrial labor force is described by Sanger, 1976; Bularzik, 1978; Hymowitz and Weissman, 1978; Farley, 1978.

2. The term, apparently first defined in a survey developed by the Women's Section of the Human Affairs Program, Cornell University/ Working Woman United in May 1975, began to be used systematically by 1976. As MacKinnon notes, "Until 1976, lacking a term to express it, sexual harassment was literally unspeakable, which made a generalized, shared, and social definition of it inaccessible" (Mackinnon, 1979:27). Sexual harassment and sexual coercion are often used interchangeably but harassment is a broader term, while coercion refers to actual "forced" sexual relations. However, all sexual harassment is potentially coercive.

3. Presently there are at least three organizations that provide services to sexually harassed working women, conduct research, and engage in public education: Working Women United Institute (WWUI), New York, N.Y.; The Alliance Against Sexual Coercion (AASC), Cambridge, Mass; and Sexual Harassment in Education and Employment (SHEE), Madison, Wisconsin. Legal aspects are reviewed by Mackinnon (1979).

4. For example, women students at both Yale University and the University of California, Berkeley have raised the issue of sexual harassment publically. Several women at Yale initiated a lawsuit against the university for not having sexual harassment grievance procedures. The suit, Alexander (Price) v. Yale University, 459 F Supp, 1 (D. Conn) 1977, established sexual harassment as a violation of Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act prohibiting sex discrimination in federally assisted programs (Nelson, 1978; Henry, 1979). The Undergraduate Women's Caucus at Yale has organized numerous activities around the issue.

Twenty-nine women students at the University of California, Berkeley have filed a complaint with HEW likewise on the basis of the university's failure to have grievance procedures. ("Students Accuse U.C. Professor of Sexual Advances," 1979). Soon after this group of women, members of WOASH (Women Organized Against Sexual Harassment), sponsored a public forum on sexual harassment ("Feminists Push Case Against U.C.," 1979).

WOASH has picketed the university administration building to protest what they termed a "cover-up" of the charges levied against a particular male professor (October 18, 1979). A few days later unknown persons also spray painted feminist slogans defacing offices and the walls in the department of the professors allegedly guilty of sexual harassment. Apparently this too was in protest of the perceived failure of the university to act straightforwardly in the case (October 22, 1979).

WOASH (Eshleman Hall, University of California, Berkeley) and SHEE (see note 3) are two groups organized to address the problem of sexual harassment of academic women. WOASH has a printed pamphlet as well (WOASH, 1979).

Recently, the results of a detailed national survey of "intimate sexual contact" in the training of psychologists have been published in that profession's official journal (Pope, Levenson and Shorer, 1979).

5. Male reports of supposed sexual harassment, for example, reveal incidents of dubious coercion as well as a fundamental failure to comprehend the actual situation faced by women (Gutek and Nakamura, 1979).

6. Bourne provides a perceptive analysis of this view in her study of medical students: "There is a notion that a woman bats her eyelashes or wiggles, and the male in question turns to jellow and gives her an A. This assumption comes closest in the social-definition case of the other-woman phenomenon. Here a woman is spoken of as having lured or stolen a man; it is as though a man, in all other respects, rational, strong, in control [of] himself and others around him, suddenly loses all of this under the spell of a sexy temptress, melts into a puddle, and is magnetically and mindlessly sucked into doing something which he has no conscious intent to do at all. It is, of course, interesting that women are granted such astonishing powers in a case like this: the attribution of power to them gets them a great deal of social approbation and gets the male off the hook as having had no active role in the whole adventure" (Bourne, 1977:4-5).

7. The mining industry, for example, shows evidence of both patterns. Group sexual harassment including the "spontaneous" reintroduction of a long-abandoned strip and grease initiation rite is prevalent among workers as is coercive sexual harassment between foremen and women workers (Bezley, 1979).

8. Because final examinations and graduation had past, we were unable to reach many students who, having disconnected their phones, presumably had left the area. Others, when contacted, reminded us that June of one's senior year is not the most convenient time to fill out and return an anonymous questionnaire. Under the circumstances, our response rate would appear to be excellent and owes much to the diligence and skill of Lavon Gieselman who coordinated this phase of the study.

9. We compared the distribution of the variables Age, Ethnicity, Grade Point Average (GPA), and Educational Aspirations of our sample with the general population of senior women. In cases where the information on these variables were unavailable we used another random sample survey as an approximation of the population. ETHNICITY, from our sample and all upper division women students (U.C. Berkeley, Office of Institutional Research 1978) respectively, the following percents are: White 73/69; Black 3/4; Chinese 12/10; Japanese 3/4; Chicana .4/3; all other 8/9. GPA, mean for our sample and all senior women (U.C. Berkeley, OIR 1977), 3.23/3.02. AGE, our sample and "Senior Survey," (U.C. Berkeley, Office of Student Affairs Research 1978) median age: 22/22. EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS, ours and "Senior Survey 1978": Law 8/9; Medicine 2/4; Ph.D. 13/18; M.A. A.B. Only 22/13; Other 12/14.

10. Being harassed oneself is strongly associated with knowing someone else who has been harassed (X^2 = 43.87, p.<001). Seventy-six percent of those harassed indicate also knowing someone harassed while only 25 percent of those not harassed do so. We assume that students who have been harassed learn of other students' experiences, though we do not assess alternative explanations for the association at at this time.

11. As can be seen, those harassed, which include incidents ranging from minor to severe, offer the least severe ratings, while those who know of someone else's experience, presumably unlikely for the most minor of episodes, have the most severe ratings, but the differences are not statistically significant by either measures of association (X^2=4.23, ns) or mean differences (F=1.97, p < .15).

12. Numbers refer to individual questionnaires returned by respondents to our survey.

13. This anonymous quotation is taken from a series of statements collected by WOASH (Women Organized Against Sexual Harassment) in 1979 documenting a pattern of sexual harassment by a particular professor.

14. The author apparently fails to appreciate the irony of asserting that female students are <u>unilaterally</u> manipulative but male faculty are significantly more "Machiavellian."

15. A recent study (Platt, Parsons, and Kirschstein, 1976) argues on the basis of self-reported teaching goals that university faculty successfully minimize strain between research and teaching functions by stressing "cognitive rationality" in the latter. The study fails to address the non-meritocratic features of actual teacher behavior, including of course pursuit of sexual interest.

16. Historically, higher education is characterized by expansion and exclusion of women (Graham, 1978). While women now comprise more than half of all college students, men continue to dominate the faculty, especially within higher ranks and at major universities. For example, about 95 percent of university full professors are men (Patterson and Engelberg, 1978).

17. As Tresemer (1975) has pointed out, this recent work has supplanted earlier formulations (e.g., Komarovski, 1946; Horner, 1970), often cited and typically exaggerated, which viewed women as suppressors of their own academic accomplishment.

18. At one time, it may be recalled, college officials, acknowledging the very real danger of improper sexual advances by male instructors, required that office doors remain ajar while consulting with a woman student (Bernard, 1968). The "seduction of a coed" could be a cause célèbre, scandalous enough to cause a dismissal for "moral turpitude." Elizabeth Scott (personal communication, 1979) reports that the University of California, Berkeley once forbade couches, day beds and cots in faculty offices and instructed janitors to report violators.

19. A university psychologist and self-identified feminist (cited in Munich, 1978) argues that college women experiencing sexual harassment face a "fight or flee" situation and that flight is more often the realistic course of action. This may well be the case individually, but the net effect of not fighting the practice may in the long run be more damaging to women as a group.

20. At this point we do not explore the implications of the greatly increased "sexualization" (or "sexual attractiveness standard") of the workplace, largely neglected by sociologists (Goffman, 1977; Farley, 1979; Mackinnon, 1979).

21. Some have viewed the male sexual initiative as a general consequence of male socialization for aggression and female socialization for passivity (Gagnon, 1973), while others interpret it as a more direct behavioral indicator of males greater social power and privilege (Laws and Schwartz, 1975; Henley, 1977; Hochschild, 1975; Oakley, 1972). Both explanations add to our understanding of the male initiative.

22. Farley contends that:

> [T]here is no aspect of women's deplorable situation at work today, be it economic or otherwise, that has not either been created or maintained by [sexual harassment] (Farley, 1979:xv).

This would appear difficult to sustain.

On the other hand, the Working Women United Institute identifies sexual harassment as the "single most widespread occupational hazard"

faced by working women (1978:1). Comparability with health and safety conditions is difficult, but the results of many surveys and testimonies (e.g., San Francisco Chronicle, 1979) surely point to its pervasive nature.

Recently it was reported that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has become the first federal agency to establish a formal grievance mechanism, one which acknowledges that sexual harassment constitutes sex discrimination (New York Times, 1979).